



County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

425 Shatto Place, Los Angeles, California 90020
(213) 351-5602

PHILIP L. BROWNING
Director

BRANDON NICHOLS
Chief Deputy Director

Board of Supervisors

HILDA L. SOLIS
First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

DON KNABE
Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

August 26, 2016

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: Philip L. Browning
Director

U by Brandon Nichols

ETTIE LEE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Ettie Lee Homes Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in March 2016. The FFA has one office located in the Fifth Supervisorial District and provides services to the County of Los Angeles DCFS placed children. According to the FFA's Program Statement, its stated purpose is, "to provide each child with a safe and nurturing environment in which to meet his/her unique challenges, to provide the most home-like environment possible and to offer comprehensive and effective treatment that supports the child to meet his/her goals."

The QAR looked at the status of the placed children's safety, permanency, and well-being during the most recent 30 days and the FFA's practices and services over the most recent 90 days. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all 9 focus areas: Safety, Permanency, Placement Stability, Visitation, Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment & Linkages, Teamwork, and Tracking & Adjustment.

In June 2016, the OHCMD Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA scored at or above the minimum acceptable score in all areas; therefore, the FFA did not require a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).

Each Supervisor
August 26, 2016
Page 2

If you have any questions, your staff may contact me or Aldo Marin, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

PLB:KR
KDR:rds

Attachments

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer
John Naimo, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Terri Varnum, Chief Executive Officer, Ettie Lee Homes Foster Family Agency
Lajuannah Hills, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division
Lenora Scott, Regional Manager, Community Care Licensing Division

**ETTIE LEE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW (QAR)
FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The Out-of-Home Care Management Division (OHCMD) conducted a Quality Assurance Review (QAR) of the Ettie Lee Homes Foster Family Agency (the FFA) in March 2016. The purpose of the QAR is to assess the FFA's service delivery and to ensure that the FFA is providing children with quality care and services in a safe environment, which includes physical care, social and emotional support, education and workforce readiness, and other services to protect and enhance their growth and development.

The QAR is an in-depth case review and interview process designed to assess how children and their families are benefiting from services received and how well the services are working. The QAR utilizes a six-point rating scale as a *yardstick* for measuring the situation observed in specific focus areas. The QAR assessed the following focus areas:

Status Indicators:

- Safety
- Permanency
- Placement Stability
- Visitation

Practice Indicators:

- Engagement
- Service Needs
- Assessment & Linkages
- Teamwork
- Tracking & Adjustment

For Status Indicators, the QAR focuses on the focus child's functioning during the most recent 30-day period, and for Practice Indicators, the QAR focuses on the FFA's service delivery during the most recent 90-day period.

For the purpose of this QAR, interviews were conducted with three focus children, three Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Children's Social Workers (CSWs), three FFA staff members, three certified foster parents, and one service provider.

At the time of the QAR, the FFA supervised 66 DCFS placed children in 32 certified foster homes. The focus children's average number of placements was three, their overall average length of placement was eight months and their average age was 11. The focus children were randomly selected. None of the focus children were included as part of the sample for the Contract Administration Division's (CAD's) 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review.

QAR SCORING

The FFA received a score for each focus area based on information gathered from on-site visits, agency file reviews, DCFS court reports and updated case plans, and interviews with the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, service providers, and the focus children. The minimum acceptable score is 6 in the area of Safety and 5 in all remaining areas.

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Safety - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children are free of abuse, neglect and exploitation by others in his/her placement and other settings.	6	6 - Optimal Safety Status	The focus children have a highly safe living situation with fully reliable and competent caregivers and are protected well at all times. Protective strategies are fully operative and dependable.
Permanency - The degree to which the focus children are living with certified foster parents, who are likely to remain in this role until the focus children reach adulthood, or the focus children are in the process of returning home or transitioning to a permanent home and the focus children, the FFA staff, certified foster parents, DCFS CSWs and if applicable, Department of Probation Officers (DPOs) support the plan.	5	5 - Good Status	The focus children have substantial permanence. The focus children live in a family setting that the focus children, FFA staff, caregivers and team members have confidence will endure lifelong.

ETTIE LEE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
PAGE 3

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Placement Stability - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents ensure that the focus children's daily living, learning and work arrangements are stable and free from risk of disruptions. Known risks are being managed to achieve stability and reduce the probability of future disruptions.	5	5 - Good Stability	The focus children have substantial stability in placement and school settings with only planned changes and no more than one disruption in either setting over the past 30 days.
Visitation - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents support maintaining important connections with significant family members/Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs) through appropriate visitation and other means.	5	5 - Substantially Acceptable Maintenance of Visitation & Connections	Generally effective family connections are being sought for all significant family members/NREFMs through appropriate visits and other connecting strategies. All appropriate family members/NREFMs have regular visits.
Engagement - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents working with the focus children, their family members/NREFMs and other team members for the purpose of building a genuine, trusting and collaborative working relationship with the ability to concentrate on the focus children's strengths and needs.	5	5 - Good Engagement Efforts	To a strong degree, a rapport has been developed, such that the FFA staff, DCFS CSWs, DPOs (if applicable), caregivers and the focus children feel heard and respected. Reports indicate that good, consistent efforts are being used.

ETTIE LEE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
PAGE 4

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Service Needs - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children work toward ensuring the focus children's needs are met and identified services are being implemented and supported and are specifically tailored to meet the focus children's unique needs.	5	5 - Good Supports and Services	A good and substantial array of supports and services substantially matches intervention strategies identified in the focus children's case plans. The services are generally helping the focus children make progress toward planned outcomes.
Assessment & Linkages - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs understand the focus children's strengths, needs, preferences and underlying needs and services provided are regularly assessed to ensure progress is being made toward case plan goals.	5	5 - Good Assessment and Understanding	The focus children's functioning and support systems are generally understood. Information necessary to understand the focus children's strengths, needs and preferences is frequently updated.
Teamwork - The degree to which the "right people" for the focus children and their family members/NREFMs, have formed a working team that meets, talks and/or makes plans together.	5	5 - Good Teamwork	The team contains most of the important supporters and decision-makers in the focus children's lives, including informal supports. The team has formed a good, dependable working system that meets, talks and/or plans together.

ETTIE LEE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
PAGE 5

Focus Area	Minimum Acceptable Score	FFA QAR Score	FFA QAR Rating
Tracking & Adjustment - The degree to which the FFA staff and certified foster parents involved with the focus children and their family members/NREFMs are carefully tracking the progress that the focus children are making, changing family circumstances, attainment of goals and planned outcomes.	5	5 - Good Tracking and Adjustment Process	Intervention strategies, supports and services being provided to the focus children are generally responsive to changing conditions. Frequent monitoring, tracking and communication of the focus children's status is occurring.

OHCMD conducted the last QAR of the FFA in June 2015, and noted opportunities for improvement in the focus areas of Safety and Teamwork. In September 2015, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR and to provide the FFA with technical support to address methods for improvement in these areas. Based on the information below, it appears that the FFA showed improvement in the areas of Safety and Teamwork on their 2015-2016 QAR.

STATUS INDICATORS
(Measured over last 30 days)

Status Indicators	Safety	Permanency	Placement Stability	Visitation
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	5
2015-2016 Scores	6	5	5	5

In the area of Safety, the OHCMD found that the FFA had implemented their 2014-2015 Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to enhance the quality of care provided to the placed children in their care. During the last QAR, there were two special incidents that were not reported timely to the appropriate parties. Immediately after the QIP was approved, the FFA staff received a training on reporting special incidents timely to all required parties. The FFA is also providing training to the FFA staff and certified foster parents on the protocols for the timely submission and reporting of special incidents twice a year. Due to the training provided by the FFA, there have not been any additional concerns regarding the FFA staff reporting special incidents timely to all required parties.

The FFA staff ensures that the certified foster homes are in compliance with Title 22 Regulations prior to certification and ongoing while caring for the placed children. The FFA requires nine additional hours of training for a total of 24 hours of the certified foster parents to actively maintain their yearly certification. Additionally, the FFA provides 55 hours per year

ETTIE LEE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
PAGE 6

of in-service trainings to their certified foster parents on various topics, including Reporting Special Incidents and Child Abuse Reporting, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder/Attention Deficit Disorder, Domestic Violence and the Effects on Children, and Functioning as a Team. The certified foster parents are also encouraged to attend additional foster parent trainings offered at their local Community College. During every home visit, the FFA Social Workers meet with the children privately to assess their safety and observe the certified foster homes to determine if there are any child safety hazards or concerns. The FFA Social Workers also conduct quarterly home inspections, which includes a safety home assessment. The FFA recruiter/trainer conducts yearly home inspections as part of the recertification process to ensure the certified foster homes continue to meet the Title 22 safety guidelines.

The focus children reported feeling safe and comfortable in their certified foster homes. The focus children also reported that they are comfortable with relaying any safety related concerns to their certified foster parents and FFA Social Workers. The focus children have been free from harm in their placement and other daily settings, including school and in the community.

According to the DCFS CSWs, there are no child safety issues regarding the certified foster parents or their certified foster homes. One DCFS CSW reported that the certified foster parents are protective and ensure the focus child's safety. Another DCFS CSW reported that the FFA Social Worker immediately conducted a home visit to review the visitation plan and FFA guidelines with the certified foster mother to ensure safety when the request was made by the DCFS CSW.

In the areas of Permanency, Placement Stability, and Visitation, the FFA continues to provide a good quality of services and stability to the focus children. The FFA Social Workers discuss the placed children's needs and their permanent plan with the certified foster parents. The FFA Social Workers explain to the certified foster parents how they could support Family Reunification and Adoption services. According to the FFA administrator, the FFA staff promotes and encourages adoption as permanent plans for the placed children. The three focus children have Family Reunification services to reunify with their respective mothers and their certified foster parents transport them to and from their visits, as well as monitor their visits, including visitation with their siblings. One DCFS CSW reported that the certified foster mother has been cooperative and willing to extend the siblings' visits, allowing the focus child to have more bonding time with his siblings. During the QAR, one focus child was reunified with his mother. The DCFS CSWs, FFA staff and the three focus children reported that the focus children have strong attachments to their certified foster families. The certified foster mothers reported that they immediately integrate the placed children into their family. The first focus child reported that she feels that she is part of the certified foster family and appreciated the beautiful dress that her certified foster mother bought for her to wear at the foster mother's biological daughter's quinceañera (a coming of age celebration at age 15). The Quality Assurance Reviewer observed pictures from the quinceañera in the certified foster home, which included the focus child and the other placed children. This focus child's DCFS CSW reported that the focus child asked the certified foster mother to start saving money for her own quinceañera. The second focus child's DCFS CSW reported that his biological mother told him she was impressed with the improvement in her son's behavior

ETTIE LEE HOMES FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW
PAGE 7

while placed in his current certified foster home. The third focus child's DCFS CSW reported that the FFA Social Worker immediately addresses the focus child's behavioral issues and needs. This DCFS CSW also described the FFA Social Worker as being very proactive with the focus child's educational needs and his desire to join the school basketball team (which he did). The third focus child also reported that his FFA Social Worker gave him a basketball and that his certified foster mother treats him well.

PRACTICE INDICATORS
(Measured over last 90 days)

Practice Indicators	Engagement	Service Needs	Assessment & Linkages	Teamwork	Tracking & Adjustment
2014-2015 Scores	5	5	5	4	5
2015-2016 Scores	5	5	5	5	5

In the areas of Engagement, Service Needs, Assessment and Linkages, and Tracking and Adjustment, the FFA continues to make good efforts to engage the focus children and key people in decisions that are being made on their behalf. Two of the DCFS CSWs reported that the FFA Social Workers provide frequent updates regarding the focus children's well-being via telephone, e-mail, text, and in-person. The FFA Social Workers reported that they also provide updates to and obtain feedback from service providers, including teachers. The FFA Social Workers reported that they also initiate services and/or assessments needed by the placed children. One of the FFA Social Workers requested an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and a Therapeutic Behavioral Services assessment for the third focus child. This focus child had the assessments and his certified foster mother is also assisting him with his reading and homework.

The FFA Social Workers assess the focus children's progress and needs during their weekly home visits, weekly FFA staff meetings and in ongoing discussions with service providers. The FFA Social Workers document the focus children's progress in the Needs and Services Plan (NSP) and also share the information with the DCFS CSWs via e-mail and/or telephone. The FFA Social Workers, focus children, and certified foster parents, as well as two DCFS CSWs, indicated that they work collaboratively to develop the NSP goals. The DCFS CSWs reported that they receive NSPs. Two DCFS CSWs reported that they and the FFA Social Workers collaboratively adjust interventions, services, and NSP goals as needed. The FFA Social Workers utilize weekly home progress notes (including feedback regarding medical, dental, medication, therapy, education, visits with family members/NREFMs, child's needs and concerns, and foster parent input), NSPs, school report cards, and feedback from service providers to track and make adjustments to ensure the focus children are progressing toward their case plans.

In the area of Teamwork, the OHCMD found that the FFA had implemented their 2014-2015 QIP to enhance the quality of care provided to the placed children in their care. During the

last QAR, there was only one focus child that had a team meeting during the 90-day QAR review. The FFA staff reported that since the QIP was approved, they have been initiating team meetings prior to the quarterly NSPs. The FFA staff invites and coordinates the FFA team meetings with the FFA Supervisor, DCFS CSW, assigned service providers, family members/NREFMs, and the placed children. During the current QAR, two of the focus children had a team meeting initiated by their respective FFA Social Worker. The other focus child had a team meeting in July 2016. One of the FFA Social Workers indicated that she also attended the third focus child's IEP meeting.

NEXT STEPS TO SUSTAIN SUCCESS AND OVERCOME CURRENT CHALLENGES

In June 2016, the OHCMD provided the FFA with technical support related to the CAD's 2015-2016 Contract Compliance Review findings in the areas of Licensure/Contract Requirements, Certified Foster Homes, Facility and Environment, Maintenance of Required Documentation and Service Delivery, and Health and Medical Needs. Technical support was provided on how the FFA can ensure that the FFA staff is reporting special incidents timely to the appropriate parties; the FFA is free of substantiated Community Care Licensing citations; certified foster parents obtain CPR and First Aid trainings prior to recertification; monetary and clothing allowance logs are maintained appropriately; NSPs are comprehensive; DCFS CSW's signatures are obtained timely for the authorization of the NSPs; and Initial dental examinations are conducted timely.

In June 2016, the Quality Assurance Reviewer met with the FFA to discuss the results of the QAR. The FFA met the minimum acceptable score in all areas; therefore, a QIP is not required. The OHCMD Quality Assurance staff will continue to provide ongoing technical support, training, and consultation as needed.